



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

No. 16-060

July 8, 2016

MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

COMMISSIONER NAMES DYSLEXIA TASK FORCE

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt has named a task force to study dyslexia and develop recommendations on policy, personnel, and the instructional and fiscal resources needed to identify and support students with dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a learning disability that is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. While dyslexia is recognized as a specific learning disability in both federal law and Kentucky regulations, there has been a lot of discussion over the years as to whether dyslexia adversely impacts a child's education so much that he or she requires specially designed instruction.

"Dyslexia is a growing issue that needs to be better understood by our educators and policy makers," Pruitt said. "There are children in Kentucky's schools that need greater support to allow them the opportunity to learn and be successful. They are our students and it is their right – and our responsibility – to provide them the kind of education that can help them excel. It is time to dig more deeply into how we can best educate these children."

Jeanna Mullins with the University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute will facilitate the group's work, which will include:

- surveying the national landscape by reviewing the most current national data and research on dyslexia;
- conducting an environmental scan to determine implications for policy and programming;
- reviewing current policies and practices being implemented across the Commonwealth and other states for screening, identifying and instructing students with dyslexia;
- examining and analyzing state level intervention data and current practices for students with dyslexia; and
- developing recommendations to the Commissioner of Education on policy, personnel, and the instructional and fiscal resources needed to support the implementation of the methodologies for identifying and serving students with dyslexia.

(more)

Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>

Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/kydeptofed and Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kydeptofed

The task force will develop and report findings and recommendations to the commissioner by May 31, 2017.

“It’s important to remember that there will not be a silver bullet that can automatically help all children with dyslexia perform better in the classroom. Each child has his or her own unique circumstances and needs and we must be mindful of that,” Pruitt said. “While we can’t provide teachers with a single program or idea that will reach everyone, what we can do is provide more information, more options and have an open and honest discussion about dyslexia and how we can better serve these children.”

Kentucky has a rich history of dyslexia awareness, and as part of its work the task force will hear from individuals who have experience and expertise in this area, Pruitt said.

Those named to the Dyslexia Task Force include:

- Allison Slone, teacher, Rowan County Public Schools
- Amy Chesney, parent, Scott County Public Schools
- Amy Lingo, Ed.D., associate dean for academic affairs and unit effectiveness, University of Louisville
- Brian Lovell, director of personnel, Union County Public Schools, and chair of the State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children
- Lee Ann Jung, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Early Childhood, Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling, University of Kentucky
- George Hruby, Ph.D., executive director, Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD)
- Jackie Risdien-Smith, director of special education, Lincoln County Public Schools
- Jim Feger, behavior consultant, Special Education Division of the Southeast/South-Central Educational Cooperative
- Dr. Joe Bargione, Ph.D., lead psychologist, Jefferson County Public Schools
- Kayla Steltenkamp, special education teacher, Boone County Public Schools
- Meena Wood, literacy consultant, Special Education Division, Western Kentucky Educational Cooperative
- Michelle Antle, field training coordinator for the Kentucky Autism Center (KATC), Special Education Division of the Green River Regional Educational Cooperative (GRREC)
- Michelle Gadbury, director of special education, Jessamine County Public Schools
- Michelle Praria, teacher, Woodford County Public Schools
- Patty Grable, director, Special Education Division of the West Kentucky Educational Cooperative
- Tami Trunick, Decoding Dyslexia KY
- Zelinda Fellows, family member

The Dyslexia Task Force’s first meeting is scheduled for July 20 in the Ground Floor Meeting Room (G-1) of the Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort.

###

Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>

Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/kydeptofed and Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kydeptofed